



Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London, date unknown

## 'Soap Box' Oratory

There is a great tradition of open-air oratory in the working-class movement. Wal Hannington gives it a lot of attention under the heading “Street Corner Meeting”. Such open-air meetings can also take place at factory gates, at suitable times.

This tradition can also be seen among the religious people and in the bible stories of the prophets and the New Testament stories of John the Baptist, Jesus and St Paul, for some examples.

Lenin, too, was known to be an open-air speaker to impromptu crowds, and there are films of him doing so.

“Soap Box” oratory is a great way to learn how to

communicate with the people *en masse* (“in their numbers”). Speaking in public is an art, and like any other art it requires many hours of practice to make it approach anything like perfection.

This kind of interaction with people, including strangers, also breeds confidence in the people, and love of the people. It is part of the “legalisation” of our organisations, including the communist party. Putting yourselves in front of the people and interacting with them means that they, too, can no longer regard you as strangers. Nor do they have to rely on the bourgeois mass media for news of you, or for an explanation of what you are.

### **Agitprop and Induction**

There is an overlap between Induction and Agitprop.

We have made two separate courses, with perhaps a tacit understanding that Induction is the internal business of our structures, while Agitprop is for consumption by people who are outside it.

This is not the case. In fact, Agitprop is as much for “internal” consumption as it is for those who may not yet be organised, while Induction in turn requires Agitprop. One can even say that Induction is a process of Agitprop with the end result being the generation of cadres of the Party and of the Movement.

The overlap between Agitprop and Induction is particularly apparent in this part of our Agitprop course. In the end, what we are learning in both cases is how to be cadres, or what are sometimes called “tribunes of the people”. It is all about communicating.

### **Speakers’ Corner**

The illustration shows the Speakers’ Corner in London, which is an expanse of grass in Hyde Park near the Marble Arch, where all kinds of speakers gather at suitable times to address the passers-by. There is another place in London on Tower Hill where this tradition of open-air speaking used to be carried on, and maybe still is.

- The above is to introduce part of our reading-text: [Marches, Seminars, Public Meetings, and Soap Box Oratory](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).